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# National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the National Association for Welfare Research and Statistics (NAWRS) and the West Virginia Department of Health & Human Resources (DHHR), I would like to extend an invitation to you to join us in the river city of Charleston, WV for the 47<sup>th</sup> Annual NAWRS Workshop. This gathering will be held from August 19 – 22, 2007, at the Charleston Marriott Town Center Hotel.

The Theme for this year's gathering is "Putting Research into Action: Making the Connection with Program Managers." Our Program Chairs have been working hard to provide a variety of formats conducive to relevant discourse on "Making Connections" to facilitate effective service delivery through application of research and evaluation. The Appalachian Region provides an ideal backdrop for such discussion and inquiry, given its history and relevance to the development of public welfare services, philosophies, and systems.

As the only State totally contained within the boundaries of Appalachia, we believe that West Virginia provides the ideal location for this gathering. Lying within 8 hours direct travel time to over 70% of the U.S. population, it demonstrates the centrality of this Region to our great economic and population centers, yet often lying worlds away. We will provide hands on exposure to this beautiful but hard land, and the proud, resourceful people that have mastered crafts and formed strong communities to eke out an existence. Through our planned events, we will strive to provide insights into the culture, challenges, and the triumphs of the Appalachian inhabitants. Mountain roots run deep, and are very strong.

In addition to the Conference Agenda sessions, we will provide a Rolling Workshop on Sunday, August 19<sup>th</sup>. This will offer a guided tour of the beautiful mountain area around Beckley, WV, as well as a visit to the craft center at Tamarack (lunch on your own), a view of some engineering accomplishments (e.g., the New River Gorge Bridge), and some beautiful mountain scenery at Hawks Nest. We will then return for the President's Reception Sunday Evening.

Following a day of Conference Sessions, we will have a catered buffet dinner under the dome of the Capitol Rotunda. This Cass Gilbert designed Capitol building provides a proud edifice for the People's House of West Virginia. We will then walk over to the State Cultural Center (home of the nationally syndicated "Mountain Stage") for a one-Act play by the noted performer Karen Vuranch, entitled "Coal Camp Memories". In the one Act, four Scene play, Ms. Vuranch ages on stage, while taking us through the stages of life in a coal mining camp. We will then invite everyone back to the Hospitality Room for a snack before retiring.

On Tuesday evening, for those looking to attend, we will have a mini theater set up in the Marriott, and present a showing of the recent film "We Are Marshall." Combined with guest speakers, see how this tragedy has dominated the psyche of a city, a university, and a Region, and the triumphant rise from the ashes. The chant "We Are Marshall" will remain with you long after the movie ends.

We recognize the importance of networking, and invite you to make the Hospitality Room the center of your stay. We will strive to make you welcome and comfortable during non-event hours, and assist you in planning any individual activities or trips you desire. We will open Hospitality on Friday evening, August, 17, 2007, and encourage you to make yourself at home with us throughout your stay. If there is anything we can do to assist you in your planning for this Conference, please let us know.

Rick Brennan, NAWRS President

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